AFCARS

Introduction

In response to State requests, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has
designed the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) so
that States, **at their option**, may include comments regarding their data with each
transmission. States argued that the capability of commenting upon data anomalies should be
provided to aid interpretation of AFCARS data.

Information on *how* to "footnote" the AFCARS submission is included in Technical
Assistance Bulletin #3, Optional Explanatory Footnotes. There you will find complete format
information. This bulletin describes *what* to footnote. That is, the bulletin is to suggest the
types of information that States may wish to include in explaining State AFCARS data.

The questions below are only meant to uncover some of the issues that may impact the
validity of state-to-state comparisons. States are in no way limited to answering only those
questions posed. Neither are States expected or required to address all the issues highlighted
by the questions.   In deciding what to footnote, States should follow a rule of reason,
signaling significant issues that may lead to misinterpretation of the data.

General Questions

States may wish to footnote the submission of **any element** when one of the following
general conditions apply:

-       The required data element is not currently collected in the State's information
        system;

-       There is legislation/regulation that currently impedes the State's ability to
        capture information for the required data element;

- The State includes in its definition of the data element anything that is not explicitly stated in the AFCARS definition according to the *Final Rule*. If this is the case, please note the discrepancy. (For example, does the element submitted for "Child Has Been Clinically Diagnosed with Disability" include cases where there has been no *clinical* diagnosis?)

Foster Care

#00) General Information
- Does the population being reported include cases in juvenile justice system? If so, what per cent of all reported cases do they represent?

- Does the population being reported include cases in mental health? If so, what per cent of all reported cases do they represent?

- Does the population being reported include cases in mental retardation? If so, what per cent of all reported cases do they represent?

- Does the population being reported include cases in developmental disabilities? If so, what per cent of all reported cases do they represent?

- If there is the possibility of duplication, what is the estimate of the number of records?

- Which method of extraction did you use, Temporary (based on actual dates in care) or Permanent (based on the computer-generated transaction dates)?

#04) Record Number
- Are the record numbers in the data set encrypted state child identifier numbers or are they sequential numbers?

#08) Child's Race
- If State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#09) Child's Hispanic Origin
- If State tracks hispanic as a race, how were those children coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and hispanic origin = yes)

#10)   Child Diagnosed with Disability
-          Does the corresponding State data element require clinical diagnosis?

#28)   Neglect
-          Is mental/emotional abuse included in the reporting of this data element?

#41)   Current Placement Setting
-          How does State define Group Home (option "4")?

-          How does State define Institution (option "5")?

-          Is juvenile justice population included (as Institution, option "5")?

-          Are unlicensed relative homes included in relative foster home (option "2")?

-          What relationships are included in Foster Family Home - Relative (option "2")?

-          What types of living situations is State including in Supervised Independent Living (option "6")? (e.g., apartments, foster homes, etc.)

#43)   Most Recent Case Plan Goal
-          Does State have legislation or policy that restricts determination of certain Case Plan Goals (e.g., is State prohibited from determining adoption as case plan goal before TPR?)

#52)   1st Foster Caretaker's Race
-          If your State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#53)   1st Foster Caretaker's Hispanic Origin
-          If State tracks hispanic as a race, how were those coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and hispanic origin = yes)

#54)   2nd Foster Caretaker's Race
-          If your State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#55)   2nd Foster Caretaker's Hispanic Origin
-        If State tracks Hispanic as a race, how were those coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and Hispanic origin = yes)

#58)   Reason for Discharge
-        For death of child (option "8"): what are the reasons for death (e.g., natural causes, accident, caretaker abuse, suicide, homicide, etc.)?

Adoption

#00)   General

-        Under what circumstances were non-State agency adoptions included?

#07)   Child's Race
-        If your State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#08)   Child's Hispanic Origin
-        If State tracks Hispanic as a race, how were those children coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and Hispanic origin = yes)

#09)   Has State Determined Special Needs?
-         Does the State's definition for this element differ from Federal definition?

#10)   Basis for Determination of Special Needs
-        Does State define each of the AFCARS values for this element as special needs in all cases?

-        How does State define each of the values?

-        What criteria does State use?

#25) Adoptive Mother's Race
-        If your State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#26) Adoptive Mother's Hispanic Origin
-        If State tracks Hispanic as a race, how were those coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and Hispanic origin = yes)

#27) Adoptive Father's Race
-        If your State tracks multi-racial, how was it mapped for this element?

#28) Adoptive Father's Hispanic Origin
-        If State tracks Hispanic as a race, how were those coded for AFCARS (e.g., race = undetermined and Hispanic origin = yes)

#30) Other Relative
-        How does State define relative?

-        Does State include "fictive kin" (e.g., godparents, etc.) as relative?